

(Continued from front cover)

irrigation requirements. Meanwhile, widespread, locally heavy rainfall boosted soil moisture for summer crops from the **central Plains** to the **middle Mississippi Valley**. More than 4 inches of rain soaked portions of **central and southern Kansas**. Farther north, cool weather and occasional showers in the **Dakotas** slowed the development of spring-sown small grains. In contrast, very warm, mostly dry weather prevailed in the **Intermountain West**, increasing crop-water demands and fostering the spread of wildfires. Temperatures were cooler in the **West Coast States**, however, averaging as much as 5°F below normal in **California's Central Valley**.

Record-breaking heat persisted across the **South** until week's end, when a cold front's passage brought limited relief from heat and dryness. In **western Florida**, **Pensacola** netted six consecutive daily-record highs (101, 101, 98, 103, 99, and 102°F) from July 15-20. On July 20, **Tuscaloosa, AL** posted their fourth consecutive daily-record high and ninth in 12 days. **Tuscaloosa's** maxima peaked at 105°F on July 15 and 19, their highest readings since the mercury hit 105°F on July 12, 1980. In **Mississippi**, **Meridian's** high of 106°F on July 16 was their second-highest reading on record, behind only 107°F on July 14, 1980. For the week, high temperatures averaged 101.1°F in **Meridian** and 100.4°F in **Birmingham, AL**.

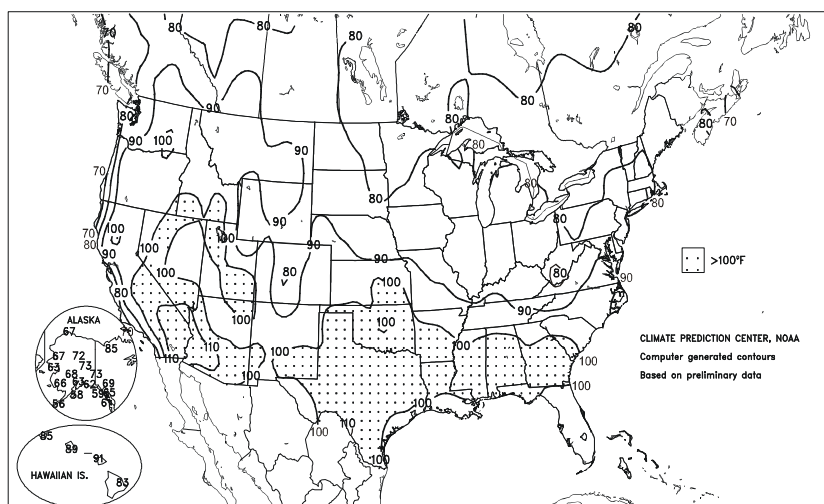
Farther west, highs in **Wichita Falls, TX** soared to 109°F on July 16 and 108°F on July 17 and 20. In the **Rio Grande Valley**, **Del Rio, TX** recorded a high of 108°F on July 16 and a weekly average maximum temperature of 103.7°F. In contrast, **Denver, CO** registered a high of 80°F on Sunday, ending a near-record 17-day streak with highs at or above 90°F. During **Denver's** 128-year period of record, only two streaks (18 days apiece in July 1874 and July 1901) were longer. Heat returned to the **High Plains** at week's end, however, as highs in **Montana** on Saturday soared to 98°F in **Helena** and **Great Falls**. Heat also shifted into the **Southwest** late in the week. In **Utah**, daily records on July 22 included 108°F in **Moab** and 103°F in **Salt Lake City**.

In contrast, cool conditions persisted from the **Midwest** into the **Northeast**. On Tuesday, highs of 58°F in **Rochester, MN** and **Green Bay, WI** were the stations' lowest on record for July. Temperatures again remained below 90°F nearly **Corn Belt-wide**, including **Chicago, IL** and **Indianapolis, IN**. Since 1900, **Chicago's** only later first occurrence of 90-degree heat was on September 14, 1915. **Indianapolis** approached their all-time-record latest first observance of 90-degree heat, set on August 6, 1979. On July 19, July-record lows were set in **Michigan's Upper Peninsula** at **Manistique** (34°F) and **Escanaba** (36°F). Previous records at both locations had stood since July 1972. In **northeastern Minnesota**, Wednesday's lows dipped to 29°F in **Tower** and 31°F in **Embarrass**. Near-freezing readings were observed as far south as **northern Lower Michigan**, where **Pellston** registered 33°F.

While soaking rains were observed in the **central Plains**, **middle Mississippi Valley**, and **Peninsular Florida**, moisture

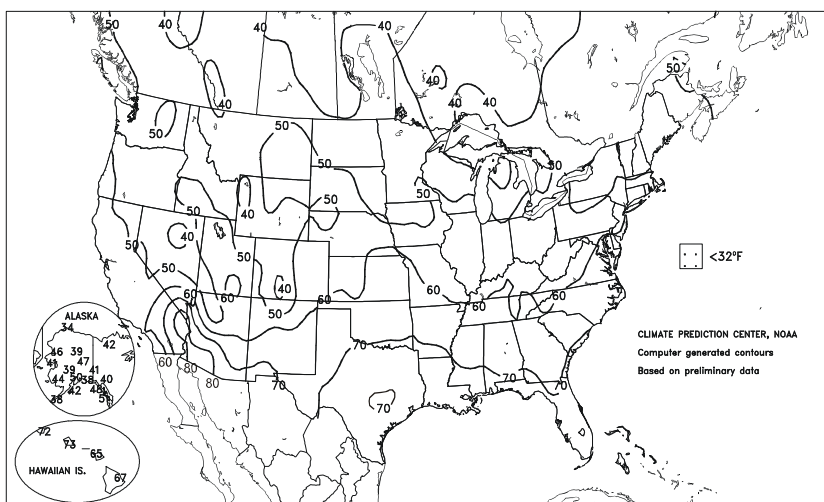
Extreme Maximum Temperature (°F)

JUL 16 - 22, 2000



Extreme Minimum Temperature (°F)

JUL 16 - 22, 2000



deficits continued to mount in most of the drought-stricken **Southeast**. Through July 22, year-to-date rainfall stood as low as 12.23 inches (32 percent of normal) in **Tallahassee, FL**, 14.71 inches (45 percent) in **Montgomery, AL**, and 15.86 inches (57 percent) in **Macon, GA**. In contrast, month-to-date rainfall reached 6.09 inches in **Tampa, FL**, accounting for 44 percent of their January 1 - July 22 total of 13.73 inches (61 percent of normal). Farther north, heavy rain ended across the **Northeast** early in the week, but nevertheless boosted the year-to-date precipitation in **Binghamton, NY** to 29.66 inches (147 percent of normal), well above their January-July 1998 record of 29.00 inches. In addition, **Binghamton's** high temperature last reached the 80-degree mark on June 25 (83°F), and never exceeded 78°F during the first 22 days of July. **Binghamton's** record-low total of days with 80-degree warmth in July was 3 days in 1992.

Cool, showery conditions further eased dryness across **mainland Alaska**, where temperatures averaged as much as 5°F below normal. Cool, wet weather lingered across **southern Alaska**. In the **Aleutians**, **Cold Bay** noted daily-record lows on Monday (38°F) and Saturday (41°F). Meanwhile in **Hawaii**, significant rainfall was confined to windward locations, resulting in little change across drought-affected leeward areas.